

Submitter: Matthew Sundberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

Dear Committee,

OregonFlora is *the* definitive resource for information about plants in Oregon. It is a highly curated and constantly updated source for plant identification, habitat, and occurrence data. OregonFlora's tools and data are relied upon by scientists and land managers statewide, including at the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Land Management, and many universities. It's also heavily used by private industry, like with ranchers, farmers, loggers, nurseries, and in restoration work. I urge you to pass this bill and safeguard a sustainable future for this invaluable resource.

I'm just an amateur plant enthusiast, yet I use OregonFlora's resources when planning places to go on hikes and trying to identify plants in the field. I've also used their tools to find native plants to grow; they have this great tool you can use to plan a garden for pollinators which won't even need watering that often, since the native plants are adapted to the local climate (<https://oregonflora.org/garden>, it's really cool!). Anyways, here are some things to keep in mind while considering this bill:

* Plant information needs maintenance. Photos and observations (confirmed identifications of plants living at a specific location) are constantly being added to the database. Also new species are discovered and genetic research means existing classifications are constantly being updated, merged, and split. Just last summer some new types of mint were discovered in Eastern Oregon, in fact.

* Not only native plant information is tracked by OregonFlora: they have hundreds of thousands of data points on weeds and invasive species, too. This information is useful in habitat restoration work and agriculture.

* They have data from 2024 to as far back as the 1800's (here's a 1894 specimen of Camas: <https://oregonflora.org/collections/individual/index.php?occid=4442354>). Researchers have used historical data like this from OregonFlora to track plant habitat migration, an indicator of climate change. This type of research is useful to agriculture (the wine industry is particularly sensitive), the forestry industry, determining future fire risk, not to mention in mitigating the impacts to Oregon's beloved wildernesses.

* There are a ton (over 60,000) of amazing photos made available in their database. Not only are they often gorgeous (making for great lock screens and wallpapers), they're used as valuable reference material when identifying plants.

* As an anecdote, the Native Plant Society of Oregon swears in new officers on the

print version of the Flora. It's the "plant bible" of the Pacific Northwest, so to say.
* OregonFlora's website is available for free to everyone, without a pay-wall or subscription. This lowers the barrier of entry for citizen science and public awareness of plants as well as its academic use.

I urge you to protect this irreplaceable resource by passing this bill.

Thank you,
Matthew Sundberg